

Title: The Easy Way

Rating: PG-15, A/U, Violence

Summary: After 5th year, the "talk" with Vernon at the train station is counter-productive and Dumbledore learns how big a mistake he made by continually sending Harry back to the Dursleys. A one-shot, no pairing.

A/N: I've wondered why there aren't more stories where Dumbledore's "cleverness" comes back and bites him in the bum -- hard. Here's one of those. It's not really a fun story. This starts right after the end of book5. There's also a slight "violence/gore" warning on this! It's not overly descriptive, but there's still a "yuck" factor.

The Easy Way

A weak Voldemort sat on his throne, holding himself up mostly by strength of will and some potions. While he had told his followers that he was planning his next move, he was mostly resting to rebuild his strength. To that end, he only saw his followers when he absolutely had to at the moment. Possessing Potter a few days ago had taken a lot out of him.

He quaffed another strengthening potion before he shouted, "Pettigrew!"

A moment later, the nervous man scurried into the room and then knelt in front of him. "Y-Yes, Master?"

"Pettigrew, you are one of our best at being unseen. I want you to find a way to know where Potter is at all times this summer so that if he is away from his infernal relatives' house, I'll know it. I don't care if you have to camp out in his back garden in your rat form and then send me messages, or what you do. But if he is not there, I want to know where he is as soon as possible. Do you understand?" He would have glared at the man, but the sniveling thing was still kneeling and staring at the floor.

"Yes, Master. I understand and I have an idea from something we learned at school. I, uh," he paused fearfully for a moment.

"Go on..."

"I'll probably have to put a tracking charm on him for it to work." Pettigrew quickly got out.

Voldemort thought about that for a moment. "And I assume you have a way to monitor the tracking charm from a distance?" While he wouldn't say it, he would be impressed if the little coward could pull it off.

"Yes, Master."

He considered the problem. "He comes home on the train tomorrow and the train station is a busy place with lots of people and being bumped is not uncommon. Put on a disguise and cast your tracking charm there."

"A very good idea, Master," Pettigrew said excitedly.

"This had better work ... or else." There was no need to finish the threat. The little man had felt his hexes often enough in the past.

Pettigrew's head bobbed almost like a house-elf's. "I'm sure it will, Master."

"Then do what you need to and show me tomorrow evening. Be off." He watched Pettigrew get up and go running out. Before the strengthening potion wore off, he made his way to the bed in the next room.

For every magic that fixes something beyond normal, there was usually a price. Pepperup potions were the most common example. They gave you extra energy, but when they wore off, you were more tired than normal. The strengthening potion was only a little better. It made him recover faster, but at the cost was he had to avoid magic and rest as much as possible to get any benefit.

Voldemort reached over with his thin hand and grabbed a book on Dark Rituals and Potions to start studying it again. There were ways to quickly get back to normal, but he had to know what the price was to know if it was worth it. Of course, for the right situation...

He flipped it open to where he had last stopped looking and started reading. This first one was wonderfully gruesome and quite powerful, but it would only last for twenty-four hours and then leave him almost as helpless as a babe for one week. That trade-off would be worth it if he could get rid of Dumbledore or Potter. The requirements would not be hard to meet and an Unbreakable Vow for his caretaker could keep him safe during the week. Voldemort marked that page as a possibility and turned to the next one.

Harry Potter walked through King's Cross in a bad mood. His godfather had been killed less than a week ago and he was heading back to the Dursleys. He had also just witnessed some of the Order of the Phoenix threaten his Uncle to motivate him to be nicer to Harry. While he liked the idea of that, as it might work, it could also backfire. Worse yet, if it backfired, Vernon would be angrier than normal and Harry would have to face his uncle on his own. He hoped his uncle took the warning to heart and left him alone.

Going out to the car, he trailed a little behind his relatives. As much as he hated their house, he would be glad to out of the train station. It was so crowded that he had almost been knocked over three times as people bumped into him. One of them had even accidentally scratched his arm.

The car ride home was a quiet one. Harry tried to get a read on his uncle, but nothing was said, despite the fact that his uncle kept changing colors. The obnoxious man cycled between white and light purple several times over the course of the trip.

When they got home, Vernon slammed the car door and stalked into the house. Harry took his time and pulled his trunk out of the boot of the car and trudged into the house. He had closed the door and turned around just in time to see a huge fist smash into his face, sending his glasses flying and him sprawling on the floor.

"Come on, get up you freak," Vernon snarled. "I bet you thought having those other freaks threaten me was funny didn't you. Stand up

and let's see if you're a real man or simply rubbish to be tossed out in the bin."

Harry was not sure why he did it. Perhaps it was his need to never give up, but regardless, he pushed himself up and stood shakily. His vision was a little blurry, so he was having trouble making out what he was seeing, but Vernon was big enough he hoped he could get one good hit in to defend himself.

Moving faster than expected for a man his size, Vernon lunged and swung an upper-cut into Harry's stomach, bending him over, before a left hook hit him on the side of the face and knocked him flying again.

This time, Harry barely felt the hit to his face. He blacked out as his head hit something.

Vernon watched his so-called nephew take a tumble and hit his head on the raised brick hearth of their fireplace -- his body on the floor but his head tilted up on the brick. It was the same fireplace those freaks had come out of two years ago. Watching for a moment, he saw that the boy laid there and did not move a muscle, other than the very slow rise and fall of his chest. Satisfied that he might have beat the freakishness out of him this time, Vernon smiled for the first time since he left the house that afternoon for the train station.

Turning, he saw his son standing there with a smile on his face. "That's how it's done, Dudley. Be a good lad and take his trunk out to the curb. I don't think he'll be needing it any more."

"Vernon!" Petunia loudly hissed as Dudley gleefully dragged his cousin's trunk out of the house.

Her husband waved her protest away. "He can stay there until this evening and then Dudley and I can take him and dump him somewhere. I will not be threatened by them again, and once he's gone, he's never coming back."

A moment later, the front door opened and Dudley came in. "D-D-Dad?!"

Vernon turned saw his boy being marched in by a young woman with pink hair and she was pointing one of those magic sticks at him. His rage exploded. "What are you doing in my house?! Get out! Your kind is not welcomed here!"

The pink haired woman looked around and then she spotted Harry on the floor. "Oh, Merlin..." she breathed in horror. Shoving Dudley to the side, she raced over to the downed wizard and waved her wand over him.

"He's alive, but barely." She closed her eyes for a brief second before she waved her wand and said, "Communis Patronum." A silvery light left her stick and went through the wall.

"See here now, you can't do that freakishness in my house," the man bellowed.

Tonks stood up and glowered at him. "Did you do this to him?" she almost growled in a low voice.

Vernon stood up straighter. "It's only what he deserved for what he made you say to me."

Tonks was beyond angry. "Stupefy! Stupefy! Stupefy!" All three Muggles dropped where they were. It was all she could do not to curse them into unidentifiable corpses. Turning, she knelt back down by her charge, the boy she was supposed to be protecting. "Hang on, Harry. Help is on the way."

Why had he not told them it was this bad here, she asked herself. She wanted to stroke his cheek to give him some comfort, or maybe to give her comfort, but her limited first aid training had stressed not touching an injured person unless you had to in order to prevent worse injuries. The cut on his head was bleeding, but not fast enough to be a problem yet. Tears started to trickle down her face as she looked at him more carefully. She did not think necks were supposed to bend quite that far.

Three Apparation pops in quick succession from the front porch yanked her attention back to reality. She spun, wand at the ready, and waited.

Albus Dumbledore walked into the house. "Nymphadora, you said there was an emergency?" He stopped in his tracks and looked at the boy at her feet. Minerva McGonagall also stopped right next him, frozen in horror.

Poppy Pomfrey did not; she rushed over to the boy on the floor and immediately began waving her wand over him.

Dumbledore seemed to age as he took one more step into the room. More quietly, he asked, "What happened?"

Tonks did her best to pull herself together. "I don't know exactly. They came home and then a few minutes later, the smaller tub of lard," she pointed at Dudley, "came back outside dragging Harry's trunk and set it by the rubbish bins to be picked up tomorrow. When I took my cloak off and suddenly appeared, he freaked out and came running back into the house. I caught up to him at the door and so I followed inside to get some answers when I saw Harry here on the floor." She paused to sniffle again. "I knew he was hurt badly, so I sent the message to you."

"And what happened to them?" Dumbledore softly asked.

Tonks felt angry again. "I only stunned them after the big tub of lard said that Harry got what he deserved because..." She stopped, unable to continue, tears starting to run down her face now. Her feelings of guilt consuming her.

Dumbledore shook his head. "Minerva, will you please go back out and rescue Harry's trunk and put it in your pocket for safe keeping." The witch nodded and left. "Poppy, what can you tell me?"

Pomfrey took a little extra to work on his head before she answered. "I healed a small cut on his head and he has a slight concussion, but that will be of no consequence." The nurse turned and looked him in the eye. "His neck is broken and I don't know if it can be repaired or

not. Magic can fix a lot of things, but the spine and the brain are just too complex to do much to. If you want him to have any hope of recovery, you'll need to get a specialist from St Mungo's."

"No, it can't be..."

Albus turned and saw his deputy there. While he agreed with her despair, he was not ready to give up yet. He turned back to the nurse. "If you can get Harry to your infirmary, I shall bring the specialist to you."

"You don't understand, Headmaster. I'm keeping him alive at the moment, but I don't dare move him or we risk him never walking or doing anything with his hands again. You must bring the specialist here," Pomfrey explained.

"For his safety, I do not wish to bring someone else here..."

"There is no choice, Headmaster," Pomfrey said firmly.

"Albus, Mr Potter can never come here again," Minerva told him. "This can no longer be a hiding place for him, so there is nothing to lose by bringing a healer here."

Dumbledore nodded slowly. "While I would prefer it otherwise, I suppose you are correct. Please call Alastor and Remus to help us guard the place. I shall return with a healer as quickly as I can."

"What do you have to show me, Pettigrew?" Voldemort calmly asked, a little stronger than yesterday. At this rate, he thought it would take a month before he was at full strength again.

Pettigrew stepped forward from the small circle of Death Eaters in the room, Voldemort's best helpers that were not in Azkaban at the moment. The Dark Lord's ire burned against those who had let themselves be caught in the Ministry of Magic.

"Here is what you requested, Master. If I can enlarge it and stick it to the wall, I think it will work better."

"Proceed." He watched the balding man enlarge the parchment so it was the height of the wall and then use a sticking charm to keep it there. "Why is this map of England so important?"

Pettigrew stepped back. "If Master will look at Surrey, he will see a red dot there, as well as a small blue circle. The blue circle is the protected area we can not easily enter. The red dot is Potter."

Voldemort looked at the map. The major Muggle cities were marked. Hogsmeade and Hogwarts were marked too, as was Diagon Alley and the Ministry of Magic. Every major place was there. All they had to do was to watch the map to see when Potter moved and they would know where. Unless...

"What if your tracking charm is removed?" He found it interesting that the little man's excitement did not waver.

"The original tracking charm no longer matters, Master," Pettigrew said with a smile. "I pulled some hairs and a sample of skin from him today and I used that to tie him to this map instead of the tracking charm. I didn't want them to find the charm and try to move him somewhere we couldn't get to."

Voldemort smiled. "I'm impressed. Well thought out and executed. You shall be rewarded."

"Thank you, Master!" Pettigrew bowed.

"Bella!"

"Yes, Master."

"You will pick another Death Eater and go out and find four virgin girls who are at least thirteen and less than seventeen. I would suggest picking them from different parts of the country. Put them in a cell and see that they are well treated and that no one touches them in any way."

“Yes, Master.”

“When you have completed that, you will escort Pettigrew to the cell and let him pick one of the girls for his own to take to his room. The remaining three will be treated very well for they must be in perfect condition. If any of them do not pass the virginity test when I perform it, you will not live to see tomorrow. Am I clear, Bella?”

Bellatrix Lestrange nodded vigorously as she said, “Yes, Master.”

“You have two hours before I make my first inspection of the three girls I will use in my ritual later. Go!” he told her and pointed a finger at the door.

Bella quickly marched for the door and grabbed another Death Eater by the arm, dragging him behind her.

“Thank you for your generosity, Master,” Pettigrew told him.

He nodded in acknowledgement like a gracious king before turning to another of his Death Eaters. “Goyle!”

“Yes, Master.”

“I want this map watched around the clock. Create a schedule with twelve of the new recruits, each watching for two hours at a time. If that red dot leaves that blue circle and I’m not notified within one minute, heads will roll.” He glared at the man who started to shake.

“Yes, Master!”

“I will be in my chambers.” Voldemort left the room. He had a few potion ingredients to gather. This was simple enough he would not even need Snape.

Dumbledore flamed into the hospital wing of Hogwarts, thanks to his Phoenix. His familiar hovered for a moment so Nurse Pomfrey and

Healer Ross could take the stretcher he was holding via a sling. Once they had it, he let go of the sling and the Phoenix set him down a short distance away before flaming back to his perch.

The healer very carefully levitated the injured boy from the board he had been strapped on to the bed that would be his until he was healed, if he ever was. "I believe St Mungo's would be the better place for him, Headmaster Dumbledore, but until he wakes up on his own and we can more fully assess his injury, I suppose it doesn't matter where he is."

"Thank you for your assistance, Healer Ross," Dumbledore told the man graciously. "I believe Mr Potter is safer here and St Mungo's is safer with him here too. Madam Pomfrey will contact you as soon as he awakens."

"As you wish, Headmaster. Poppy, may I use your Floo to return?"

"Certainly, Healer. Please come with me." Pomfrey led the man to her office.

Dumbledore looked at Harry with a critical eye. As he was now, it looked like he was merely sleeping. Healer Ross had repositioned the boy's head so it was straight again. The healer had been hopeful he had not caused more damage, but he also stressed there were no guarantees in cases like this. "What have I done to you, my boy?" he whispered to himself.

"I do not envy being you when you tell Molly Weasley about this."

He nodded in agreement. "No, that will not be pleasant. I think I will postpone that meeting until tomorrow evening when we hopefully have more information."

"And while I dislike saying it, I told you it was not a good idea to leave him there, but you didn't listen to me."

A sigh escaped him. "You did, Minerva. I don't understand how this could happen. Family does not do this to each other, and there was no mistaking that Vernon Dursley meant to severely injure the boy."

“Magical family would not, but they are not magical.” He said nothing to her answer. “What will we do now? Many will lose hope when they find out that the Boy-Who-Lived can not help lead the fight.”

“I don’t know; I shall have to think about it,” he said before he turned and left.

Minerva McGonagall had never heard her mentor sound so dejected ... and with good reason, she thought.

“Master!” the young Death Eater shouted from his side of the door. Despite his shouting, he still knocked respectfully. He had seen a few punishments for those who were not respectful.

The door opened. “Yes? What’s so important?” Voldemort asked.

“Master, Potter’s dot just moved. He’s at Hogwarts now.”

When the master’s face lit up, the young Death Eater cringed and stepped back. “Let me see.” He strode into the main room and looked at the large map. It was as the young man said. “Fetch me, Pettigrew.”

“Yes, Master.” The Death Eater ran off.

A few minutes later, Pettigrew came running in. “Yes, Master?”

“Tell me, Pettigrew, is there any way to zoom in on this map so I can know exactly where Potter is inside Hogwarts.” He kept looking at the map, wondering.

“No, Master, not with that map. But I have a map of Hogwarts at home that will show where he is in the school.”

“Then go get it,” Voldemort said firmly, “now!”

“Yes, Master!”

Pettigrew ran out.

“You! Has Bella returned from her task yet?” Voldemort eyed the young man.

The young man looked scared to answer, but quickly said, “She’s returned once and is out getting the second girl now.”

“Go down to the cells. Stand guard and see to it that nothing happens to her and no one touches her -- any of them. Send Bella to me the moment she has three. Also tell her time is of the essence. The fourth girl will have to wait.”

The Death Eater ran out.

Pettigrew came running in. “Here, Master.”

Voldemort took the old parchment and looked at it. It was a map. He quickly recognized that it was of the school. As he looked at it, he saw a dot labeled “Harry Potter” and it was in the hospital wing. “What is this and where did you get it?”

“My so-called friends and I made it when we were in sixth year. This was an early version of our map of the school and where I got the idea for the large map. This prototype version shows only the students, not the teachers. I don’t have the final version which shows everyone,” Pettigrew explained.

This presented opportunity. “And it is accurate?”

“Yes, Master.” Pettigrew hastily added, “I must point out that the room could be filled with non-students and teachers and the map won’t show you that, but if it says Harry Potter is in the hospital wing, then he really is there.”

Voldemort took the map and sat down on his throne and watched it for a few minutes as he considered what might be happening and what it meant to him. He sorely wished this map would show the

teachers so he knew how many were in the castle, but... He smiled to himself as an idea came to him.

He called a Death Eater over and pressed his wand to the man's Dark Mark. While he waited, he watched the parchment map some more, running through possible actions in his mind.

A few minutes later, Bella came into the room and bowed. "Master, I have done as you asked. We found a set of triplets out together and took them all at once. There are now four girls in the cell."

"Triplets? My, Bella, you have redeemed yourself well, if they pass the virginity test. Bring the triplets up now and leave the other girl in the cell." He turned to another Death Eater as Bella left. "You, conjure or get someone to conjure three large tubs, like wash tubs."

Voldemort left for his room and brought his potion supplies out, along with a small cauldron. Checking the map, he saw Potter had not moved. Considering it was approaching ten in the evening, he felt safe in assuming Potter was not going anywhere soon.

He quickly prepared the base potion and set it to simmering before going to his throne. As he sat, Severus Snape entered the room. The man looked at the potion, but was smart enough not to go over and look.

"Snape."

"Master." Snape came over to the throne and knelt.

"Look at me." Snape looked up and Voldemort gently sent a mind probe out, hoping it would be missed. "Is Potter in Hogwarts?"

"Yes, Master. He was brought in earlier this evening."

"Why is he there?"

"I'm not sure what happened, but I do know he is in the hospital wing and they expect him to be there for some time. The Headmaster was very vague about his injuries."

"Who is in the castle at the moment?" Voldemort paid very close attention to the mind probe now.

"Dumbledore, McGonagall, Flitwick, Pomfrey, and the gamekeeper Hagrid, besides myself." Snape did not flinch or react at any time during the questioning.

Voldemort thought about that. Potter was there and only five other people. Unfortunately, one of those was Dumbledore.

"What is Dumbledore like? Is he at full strength now?"

Snape did not look surprised at the question. "He is not. Your fight weakened him. He is maybe at half-strength."

The Dark Lord could detect no lie, but he also knew Snape was a master Occlumens. He had wondered about the man's loyalty many times over the years. "Let me see your Dark Mark." When Snape presented it, Voldemort pressed his wand to it. "Make yourself comfortable near the door, Snape. Tell those who come not to interrupt me and if they have a broom to go get it. However, you will stay in this room."

"Yes, Master." Snape walked to the door to do as he was bid, expressionless the entire time.

Voldemort watched Bella come in with three dark haired girls that looked just alike, except for their clothes. They appeared to be about fourteen and like they might have been from Italy, not that it mattered. "They are controlled?" he asked her.

"Yes, Master. It was the easiest way to make sure they did not run or hurt themselves."

"Very good. Have each one of them step into one of the tubs, remove all of their clothes on the top, then get two men for each girl to hold their arms and keep them upright." He moved his small worktable over near the girls and cleaned his silver ceremonial dagger.

Turning to the girls, he could see fear in their eyes, even though they stood there and did not fight their orders. Muggles were so weak, he thought. Pulling his wand, he cast the virginity test three times and each girl passed. He put his wand away and picked up the dagger.

Going to the one on the left, Voldemort chanted a few words and then plunged the dagger into the girl's chest. The magically sharp knife cut the underlying cartilage connecting the ribs to the sternum as easily as it cut the flesh. A moment later, he put her heart into his cauldron and turned to his next victim. A minute later, all three girls were dead and the Dark Lord was finishing his potion. When it completed, he poured it into a large goblet and immediately drank it.

The pain was incredible for a moment, but then he felt like his body was expanding physically and in strength for a moment. As the unusual feeling subsided, he took stock of himself and he thought he felt better than normal. Mindful of what he had done, he glanced at a clock and saw that it was twenty after ten. He had to be in his safe place by ten tomorrow night.

"Take them away," he commanded the helpers, several of which were looking very pale. The tubs and the mess they contained were Vanished.

Looking around, he saw all of his followers and most of them had brooms.

"Snape, Goyle, set your watches to be the same. Goyle, you will go with Pettigrew to Hogsmeade and use the tunnel you told me about that leads into Hogwarts. You will wait in the tunnel until eleven o'clock and then you will enter the castle and head for the hospital wing. Take everyone who does not have a broom. Someone give me their broom and give one to Snape."

Two brooms were passed while Snape and Goyle set their watches.

"Everyone else will stay with me and we will Apparate to the gates of Hogwarts at eleven and then immediately fly as fast as possible to the school. Everyone is to make their way to the hospital wing. There you will find Potter. Save him for me, but kill anyone else you see who

does not immediately surrender. Pettigrew, Goyle, take your team and go. Do not be seen while in Hogsmeade. If anyone makes a mistake so they are seen and the Aurors show up, you might as well kill yourself. Because if you don't, I will kill you as painfully as possible. Go." Voldemort watched eight people go. They were his backups. There were a little over thirty left to go with him in the main force.

Pulling his wand he summoned a small phial from his room and put it in his robes. He also put his ceremonial dagger in a sheath and put that on his waist. He would not make the same mistake this time. "Everyone, rest. We leave in about half an hour." He sat down on his throne and turned his attention to the little map, the one that showed Potter still in the hospital wing. The rest of the Death Eaters conjured chairs and quietly talked.

At five before eleven, the Dark Lord led his team to the Apparation area. "When I give the signal, Apparate to the front gates of Hogwarts, then mount your brooms and fly as fast as you can to the castle. If the front doors are closed, break a window and go in. We will not take the time to challenge the front doors. Stay together in at least twos. Bella and Snape, you will stay with me. Snape tell us when it is one minute before eleven."

"Yes, Master." Snape paid close attention to his watch.

Voldemort leaned over to Bella and whispered. "You are to stay behind Snape and ensure he does not betray us." She nodded.

"It is time," Snape simply said.

"Go!" Voldemort Apparated. A moment later, he was in front of the school gates and the air was filled with Apparation cracks. "Let's go." He mounted his broom and flew over the gates. A quick check showed Snape behind him and Bella behind Snape.

A minute later, Voldemort saw the main doors and that they were closed. He turned towards a second floor window, since the hospital wing was on the second floor. A Blasting Hex took out the window

and he flew in. He dropped the broom waited. Snape and Bella flew in after him, as did a few more Death Eaters.

“Snape, lead the way.”

“Yes, Master.”

They were actually near the hospital wing, so a couple of minutes later, they were at the desired double doors. Snape opened them and led the small group in.

The Dark Lord waved his wand and all the lights came on. It was only a little blinding at first, since only half the lights in the corridors had been on. There was only one patient in a bed and Voldemort walked over to him. The boy looked asleep, yet he did not wake up at the noise.

“What is the meaning of this?” a shrew voice questioned.

Voldemort looked up and saw the school nurse. “Imperio.” He did not have time to waste. When her obedient look took over, he asked, “What is wrong with him?”

“He has a broken neck and is in a coma,” she woodenly answered.

“Will he heal?” Voldemort pulled out his dagger as he waited on her answer.

“We don’t know,” she finally answered, “but it doesn’t look good.”

“How did this happen?”

Pomfrey had to answer. “His Muggle uncle hit him and injured him.”

Voldemort laughed, as did all of his followers, even Snape.

With a smile, Lord Voldemort pulled out the small phial and poured the poison on his dagger. Then with a swiftness that surprised most in the room, he plunged it into the chest of Harry Potter. Only Madam Pomfrey made a strangled, choking noise. To be sure, he pulled the

dagger out, slit the boy's throat, and plunged the dagger back into the boy's chest -- a chest that had already stopped moving.

"I believe my goal has been accomplished. Shall we see if we can make it a double feature with the old man too?" he asked the room with amusement in his voice.

Before anyone could answer, the doors burst open and a wild looking Albus Dumbledore stood in the doorway, wand in hand.

"Ah, Dumbledore, thank you for coming. You've saved me the trouble of having to find you," Voldemort said genially.

"Tom, haven't you caused enough trouble in the world?"

The Dark Lord tilted his head slightly. "I would be upset at you calling me that, but I'm in far too good a mood at the moment. Your ... Vanquisher ... seems to have been vanquished." He stepped to the side and waved a hand at the body behind him, the dagger still embedded in the body.

Dumbledore paled as he took a few steps in to make sure he was seeing what he thought he saw.

"And it all happened because you sent him back to the Muggles to protect him." Voldemort laughed deeply. "How does it feel to do something so wrong, so evil to someone who trusted and depended on you? Are you proud of the way you protected your weapon against me?"

Dumbledore said nothing.

"Bella, seal the door. Avada Kedavra!" The Killing Curse flew towards Dumbledore who had to dive out of the way, giving Bella the precious seconds she needed to seal the door. "Everyone, kill him!"

Six curses flew towards what most of the Wizarding World considered the greatest wizard of the age as he tried to get up and find cover in the room that was too small for proper dueling. Most of the spells were blocked with conjured objects. Only two spells made it through.

A bright slash of red appeared across Dumbledore's chest and the old man's wand flew out of his hand, to be caught by the Dark Lord who had cast a simple summoning charm a half second after everyone else had cast their spell.

Albus Dumbledore sat on the floor and weakly held himself up by one arm. He looked over at his fellow professor in shock. "Why?"

"Snape, did you have something you wanted to tell your Headmaster?" Voldemort asked his follower casually.

"Yes, Master." Snape turned back to the man who was bleeding out on the floor. "Because you promised to keep her safe, and you didn't."

"But he killed her," Dumbledore weakly protested.

"He gave me an oath that he never tried to kill her, that she jumped in front of his spell. You promised you would keep her safe and you didn't." Snape paused to see if Dumbledore had any more arguments; if he did, he kept them to himself. "Besides, I've never understood how someone could have the truth and then not follow it. Why didn't you?"

"What?" Dumbledore hoarsely asked as he struggled to breathe.

"You never really understood me, did you? Just like you knew what was right and what was easy, and yet you took the easy way." Snape looked at Potter's corpse briefly before looking back to Dumbledore, waiting for an answer.

If Dumbledore had an answer, he did not give it. Instead, he slumped over, lying still on the floor.

The Dark Lord waved his wand and Dumbledore's body stood up. He then cast a transfiguration spell and the body turned to stone. With an evil smile, he turned to his followers. "Find all the teachers in the castle. If they resist, kill them. If they surrender, cast an Imperius on them and command them to stay here and not contact anyone

outside of the castle. Afterwards, I think we still have time to take a visit to Azkaban.”

The Death Eaters cheered and laughed. The Dark Lord smiled evilly. He still had twenty-three hours to make major steps to take over England before he took a week off to recover his strength. After that, well, the country and then the world was his for the taking.

Before he left the room, Lord Voldemort turned Harry Potter into stone as well using Dumbledore’s wand. He found the unusual looking wand to be very powerful feeling, better than his own.

His last act in the hospital wing was to give Dumbledore’s statue a mocking bow. “Thanks old man! Now it’s time to change the world for the better.” Voldemort walked out of the hospital wing with an evil laugh.

(the end)

(A/N: Harry and friends did NOT live happily ever after. Boo! Dumbledore kept making the same wrong decision over and over and the consequences finally caught up with him. Sure it was the talk at the train station that pissed off Vernon and was the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back, but Harry never should have returned to the Dursleys after his first year at school, IMO.)